



Spring 2018 Conference Focuses on Overcoming Student Barriers

The major focus for the Work Groups of the Consortium this past year has been on identifying and addressing adult student barrier to success. As our Consortium members serve over 40,000 students annually, a concern is that we move the needle to ensure a majority of our enrollees successfully advance and complete their programs. Our experience has shown that our students come from the toughest backgrounds, economically and socially, and even after enrolling in our programs they must deal with related situations that we call “barriers” to their successful completion and transition. Major barriers for our students include adverse economic pressures, family demands, child care, technology, and even self-confidence and motivation.

The Conference was held on April 10, 2018 at the Kellogg Conference Center on the Campus of Cal Poly Pomona. Workshops aimed at ways we can better support student program completion and transition through practices that increase retention, persistence, and milestone progress. Over 140 attendees participated in workshops that day. Topics included practical review of assessments to better support instruction (Jay Wright, Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems), and creating Digital Badging systems as a motivational tool and digital record of completion (Melinda Holt, Outreach and Technology Assistance Network). One of the pivotal connections this year has been with 211 Los Angeles County, providing staffers Alana Hitchcock and Crystal Yanez to give a brief overview on services.

Consortium Work Groups members provided updates on projects and efforts to support students: The English as A Second Language group presented on their consortium-developed Universal Report Card; Career Technical Education group provided an update on our in-house Workplace Readiness course, and Adult Basic/Secondary Education on efforts to support student transitions through our programs. Member staff and administration also participated in workshops in developing Professional Learning Communities, one facilitated by Sudie Whalen, of the American Institutes for Research/ California Adult Literacy Professional Development Project and the second by senior adult education administrators Rocky Bettar--Rowland Adult and Community Education, and Dr. John Kerr—Baldwin Park Adult and Community Education.